



*United States Embassy
Algiers, Algeria*

March 2, 2011

Launch of the Bilateral Contact Group on Algerian-American Counterterrorism and Security Cooperation

Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the Department of State Daniel Benjamin will arrive in Algiers on March 3 for a two-day visit. Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Kamel Rezzag-Bara, Presidential Advisor and Coordinator of the Inter-ministerial External Counterterrorism Action Group will co-chair the works of the first meeting of the Bilateral Contact Group on Algerian-American Counterterrorism and Security Cooperation. During this meeting, U.S. and Algerian delegations will exchange information and analyses on the evolution of terrorist threats in both countries and at the international level, development of links between terrorism and various types of organized crime, and expansion of bilateral cooperation. U.S. and Algerian delegations will also examine multilateral counterterrorism cooperation.

The launch of the Bilateral Contact Group on Algerian-American Counterterrorism and Security Cooperation represents a historic moment for the development of bilateral security cooperation. This mechanism will give a new qualitative impetus to the U.S.-Algerian strategic partnership. This mechanism will help structure dialogue and consultation, and incorporate all dimensions of cooperation, including political, diplomatic, security, legal, financial, operational, or technical assistance.

The second meeting of the Bilateral Contact Group on Algerian-American Counterterrorism and Security Cooperation will be held next year Washington, DC.

The United States government welcomes Algeria's unfailing commitment to the fight against terrorism and organized crime.

On the sidelines of the first meeting of the Bilateral Contact Group on Algerian-American Counterterrorism and Security Cooperation, Mr. Benjamin will hold talks with Delegate Minister for Maghreb and African Affairs Abdelkader Messahel.

The second official visit of Mr. Benjamin to Algeria falls within the framework of expanding bilateral security cooperation. Mr. Benjamin already visited Algiers on July 25-27, 2010. During his first visit, Mr. Benjamin held talks with Delegate Defense Minister Abdelmalek Guenaizia, Commander of Gendarmerie Major-General Ahmed Bousteila, and Acting Director General of the African Center for Study and Research on Terrorism (CAERT) Lyes Boukraa.



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Mr. Benjamin was instrumental in the launch of the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program (ICITAP) in Algeria in November 2010. The first ICITAP project, a workshop on ISO 17025 standards, was held at the National Institute of Forensic Science and Criminology of the Algerian National Gendarmerie January 30 through February 3 2011.

Several other workshops have been held held since July 2010, including an Antiterrorist Assistance (ATA) workshop on fraudulent travel document recognition (July), an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) workshop on bulk cash smuggling (August), an FBI's workshop on antiquities and cultural property crime (September), and an ATA workshop on major case management (October).

Moreover, a customs mutual assistance agreement was signed by Ambassador David Pearce and Director General of Algerian Customs Mohamed Abdou Bouderbala on December 2, 2010 during the visit Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy, and Business Affairs Jose W. Fernandez.